

Chancellor Parent Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 20, 2015
5:30-8:00 PM
DCPS Central Office

Meeting Objectives

Meeting participants will:

1. Learn about DCPS' Blended Head Start Model
2. Understand the strategic plan for early childhood education
3. Provide feedback on strategies DCPS uses to welcome early childhood education families and build relationships between parents and teachers

Meeting Attendees:

- *DCPS Chancellor's Parent Cabinet Members:* DCPS Chancellor's Parent Cabinet Members: Davena Archie, Nazanin Ash, Connie Brown, Olivia Chase, Laurence Gill, Michael Koppenheffer, Laura Levine, Corinne McIntosh-Douglas, Matthew O'Hara, Shanti Sale, Kevin Sampson, Shameka Stewart, and Tom Strike
- *Not in Attendance:* Michael Koppenheffer and Sweta Shah
- Chancellor Kaya Henderson
- *Office of Family and Public Engagement:* Josephine Bias Robinson, Isaac Swanson, and Allison D'Aurora
- *Guest Speaker:* Dr. Travis Wright, Deputy Chief, Early Childhood Education

Notes:

Topic	Comments
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Chancellor held the annual State of the Schools event on September 30 at Dunbar High School. NBC4 Anchor Jim Vance joined the Chancellor for the evening, and he interviewed the Chancellor on a wide variety of issues.▪ The Chancellor was in New Zealand last week at an International Education Conference where she spoke about DCPS' community engagement efforts.▪ She attended the College Board meeting where the group discussed strategies for getting students into colleges where they will be most successful.▪ The Chancellor's fifth year anniversary is in November. Parent Cabinet members are invited to her anniversary party on November 2.▪ Tonight is the last meeting with Cabinet members with six month terms.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tom Strike○ Olivia Chase○ Laura Levine

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connie Brown ▪ OFPE is reviewing applications of parents who applied for the 10 open positions on the Cabinet. Those members will be invited to serve with the current members until September 2016. This means that current members will serve an 18-month term.
Focus Topic: Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Travis Wright recently began his position as Deputy Chief of Early Childhood Education (ECE). Previously, he sat on the Head Start Policy Council made up of parents and community members that advised DCPS on improving its Head Start model. Dr. Wright has been a professor at George Washington University, and most recently he was with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Early in his career, Dr. Wright was a sixth grade teacher at the former Gage-Eckington Elementary School. He has returned to DCPS so he can continue practicing education. ▪ DC leads the nation in ECE, achieving 10 out of 10 quality indicators on the National Institute of Early Education Research's report. This rating means that DC is ranked highest in its capacity to provide ECE to 3- and 4-year olds in the city. ▪ In the past five years, DCPS' ECE division has increased the number of unique family outreach efforts it makes by over 3800%, or from 139 to 55,000. The number of applicants to ECE programs has more than doubled in five years, and the number of students who have been screened for special needs has doubled as well. ▪ ECE classrooms run one of five programs: Creative Curriculum, Tools of the Mind, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, or Dual Language. In all of these programs, students learn from thematic units, play, and discovery. ▪ DCPS also recognizes it is important to screen ECE students for potential special learning needs or developmental delays early on in their learning careers, so it is easier to get them back on track with their peers. All students are screened by the ECE team, which uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaires® to screen ECE students and determine if they should have a more in-depth screening from the Early Stages team. ▪ The ECE division administers this questionnaire to all students to reduce over-identification of any single student population. The ECE division also regularly evaluates the tools to ensure they are culturally responsive. ▪ DCPS has partnerships with community-based organizations, including homeless shelters, to help recognize potential warning signs in ECE students, so DCPS can appropriately identify students. ▪ The ECE division begins screening children when they are 2 years and 6 months old and continues until they are 6. ▪ The screening is focused on a student's development, which does not happen at the same rate and pace for all students. DCPS wants to equip teachers and school staff with the resources they need to help students overcome developmental challenges, but school staff also need to be in frequent communication with parents. Partnerships between school staff and parents are important because school staff need to know what parents are observing at home and parents can learn the signals school staff are observing in the classroom. ▪ As part of the ECE model, each school is assigned to two members on the ECE Family Services team: a Case Management Specialist and a

	<p>Parent Outreach Coordinator. These two staff members ensure ECE parents are connected with services their students need and that families are engaged with the school. DCPS understands that it is critical to support parents throughout their student's career, but especially during their ECE years. When ECE teachers, parents, and students feel supported and are openly and frequently communicating with one another, there are fewer opportunities for students to go without needed services to overcome developmental delays.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECE is important because it is the first experience most students and families have with DCPS. It is an important time to ensure students are developing but also to build partnerships between schools and parents. ECE has three phases: 1) Recruitment, 2) Identification and Placement, and 3) Induction and Welcoming. The ECE division is focusing on Induction and Welcoming to create positive communities within schools so families and teachers are connected with one another and know they are trusted partners in their student's education. ▪ DCPS implements a Head Start School-wide Model (HSSWM) in its Title I schools with ECE programs, but the goal is to implement this model to 100% of schools with ECE programs. HSSWM blends elements of the Head Start and traditional Pre-Kindergarten (PK) programs and uses federal and local funds for the program. Part of the Head Start model is helping parents build their capacity to successfully support their students and advocate for them. All ECE students in a HSSWM school have access to the program elements required by Head Start, including full-time teacher aides, dental and health screens, and a family counselor, among other elements. ▪ DCPS created the HSSWM to eliminate the differentiation between Head Start and non-Head Start classrooms in a single school. Previously, students that qualified for Title I services would be assigned to one classroom that provided the wraparound services that are part of the Head Start program. Students who did not qualify for Title I services, but attended the same school, were assigned to a separate classroom but did not receive any of the same services as their peers in the Head Start classrooms. When the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services asked DCPS in 2010 to re-evaluate how it was implementing its Head Start program, it became clear that Head Start should be applied to a whole school and blended together in classrooms. DCPS piloted this program, and saw great results. All students achieved better in the classroom, there were fewer stigmas associated with Head Start, and more students received Head Start services. Now DCPS wants to explore how to make the HSSWM available for non-Title I schools, which are not eligible for Head Start funding.
Group Discussion on Focus Topic	<p>Cabinet members posed the following questions to Dr. Wright following his presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question: What should parents do if they are concerned with the results of their ECE student's screening? ▪ Response: Parents should contact the Early Stages team, which is the team that administers ECE screenings. They can be reached at info@earlystagesdc.org or 202-698-8037.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question: What kind of data does DCPS use to monitor trends among ECE students? ▪ Response: The ECE division is trying to develop a more integrated data system, so when they are looking at an individual student, they can better understand how students are progressing through ECE classes and beyond. ▪ Question: How is DCPS thinking about the expansion of PK more broadly throughout DC beyond the HSSW model? Some schools are eliminating PK classrooms, which decreases access for students in that community. Students are now entering elementary schools at kindergarten with a large variety of PK experiences. What is the priority to get more PK classrooms into all DCPS elementary schools? ▪ Response: PK is not compulsory in DC; it is voluntary, so parents still get to choose if they send their 3- and 4-year-old students to school before they reach kindergarten. DCPS has to create and staff PK programs based on this need. If a school community does not want to send their students to PK, then the school won't fill the PK classrooms. Some schools might be at a point where there is a high demand for PK, but DC as a whole is not at that point. In DC, 69% of 3-year-olds and 99% of 4-year olds are in PK. DCPS is trying to figure out how to guarantee PK seats for Title I students. ▪ Question: What does ECE screen for when it evaluates students? Parents have reservations about ECE screenings because the result is often taking students out of the classroom where ECE students are still thriving even if they have certain development delays. When schools contact parents to discuss the results of a screening, they are only communicating the process, not the explanation for why students screened a certain way or how the school's intervention plan will get a student back on course. ▪ Response: All of ECE assessments are based on observation and understanding what kids can do. We have to trust our teachers to recognize the difference between a child who can do some remediation in the classroom and a child who might need some extra interventions. The Case Management Specialists and Parent Outreach Coordinator at schools should be explaining why students are receiving interventions to parents, so parents can be well informed and understand the school's plan for their child. ▪ Question: How does the ECE team build the capacity of teachers and schools to support children who enter PK classrooms from diverse backgrounds, especially those students who have experienced trauma? ▪ Response: DCPS is investing in strategies that build emotionally responsive skills among teachers and school leaders. There are classic symptoms of trauma that teachers should know and be able to identify. Emotionally responsive classrooms aren't just for students who have been through trauma, but all students do better in these classrooms. DCPS has recognized that there is a disconnect between how teachers
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	<p>are prepared and the reality of their classrooms. DCPS has to become an expert in making teachers effective through professional development. DCPS recently created the Office of Instructional Practice, which is responsible for developing teachers and giving them the resources they need to be successful. Additionally, as part of the Empowering Males of Color initiative, DCPS has piloted a partnership with Bank Street College of Education to train ECE teachers to teach in a more culturally responsive way to black male students. This training program has been piloted in four schools during the 14-15 school year, and the goal is to expand this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question: What kind of materials are you giving to parents so they can support their children at home? ▪ Response: Teachers have access to resources that will help shape development skills in children. They should be sharing these resources and activities with parents in parent-teacher conferences, or at other times, so parents can do these activities at home. Each ECE school also has a Parent Outreach Coordinator who can assist parents understand the activities and what they can do to reinforce development at home. ▪ Question: How many children are we reaching through ECE programs? ▪ Response: In DC, 99% of 4-year-olds are in PK, and 69% of 3-year-olds are in PK. DCPS is serving approximately 4,900 children through HSSWM. Across Title 1 and Non-Title 1 schools combined, DCPS is serving approximately 6,000 children.
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The next meeting is on November 12, 2015.